

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION
Public Testimony of Gloria Mills, Executive Director
Before the Appropriations Committee
Re: Governor's Biennial Budget (HB 6365)
February 9, 2009

Good evening Senator Hartley, Representative Fawcett and members of the Appropriations Committee. On behalf of the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation (CACT), thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 6365.

In general, the Governor's proposed budget recommends funding in FY 2010 and FY 2011 for the Department of Transportation that maintains current services in Bus Operations and the ADA Para Transit Program and does so without a fare increase. In these difficult times this is a step in the right direction.

We oppose two recommendations in the Governor's budget that will negatively impact the mobility of many Connecticut's residents and the economy of the state.

The State Matching Grants to Municipalities for Demand Responsive Transportation for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities (CGS 13b-38bb) funding was not included in the Governor's budget recommendations for the Department of Transportation's Bus Operations line item. The program provides demand responsive transportation services in 136 towns with a total of \$3.9 million in state matching grants and creates many regional transportation solutions.

This program is about more than the mobility and independence of the elderly and people with disabilities. The state matching grant program is also about:

- jobs that family members are able to keep because their loved ones are safely transported to their destinations;
- access to medical care that keeps people healthy longer and living independently for greater cost savings to the state;
- stimulating the economy by providing seniors and people with disabilities access to the marketplace to spend their money on goods and services; and,
- quality of life for seniors and people with disabilities which improves with access to the community and friends.

Transportation is the number one gap in service cited by providers and the number one missing service identified by Connecticut residents in the state's Long-Term Care Needs Assessment Survey. Every year, a greater percentage of Connecticut's 1 million baby-boomers (almost 1/3 of the population) and people with disabilities increase the demand for transportation options in a state where as many as 70 towns have no or limited public transportation (see map-Transit for Connecticut).

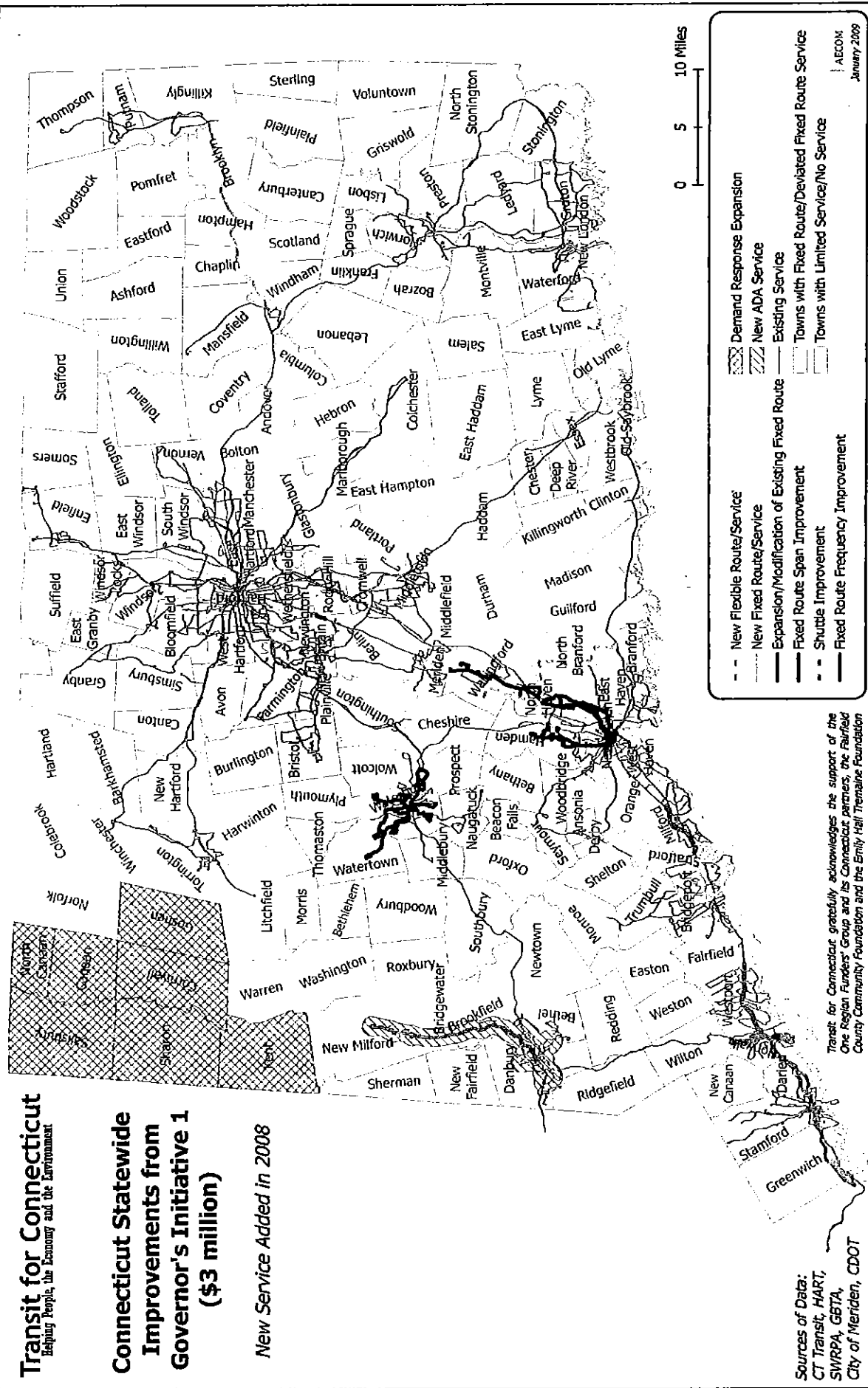
The state matching grant program to municipalities for demand responsive transportation for elders (60+) and persons with disabilities (**CGS 13b-38bb**), enacted in 1999 to expand demand responsive transportation services, allocates funds to towns based on a formula (50% based on

Transit for Connecticut

Helping People, the Economy and the Environment

Connecticut Statewide Improvements from Governor's Initiative 1 (\$3 million)

New Service Added in 2008



\$3 million in operating funds provided under the Governor's Initiative 1 allowed expansion of existing routes in the New Haven region, increased hours of service around Waterbury, frequency improvements in southwest Connecticut, in the Milford area and Danbury to New Milford, and new routes in the Bridgeport region, in Old Saybrook-Old Lyme-East Lyme, in the Meriden area, and in northeast Connecticut from Willimantic to Danielson. Demand response service was also extended in northwestern Connecticut and the Danbury/Brookfield/New Milford area. Nearly 70 towns still have limited or no service.